

Arrest warrant issued, related to Beech-Nut warehouse demolition

By JOSHUA THOMAS

For The Recorder

CANAJOHARIE -- The Town Court of Minden has issued an arrest warrant for Rodney Garvin, principal of B&B Recycling, of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, after he failed to appear in court.

He was supposed to answer to a variety of New York state building code violations relating to warehouse removal work at the former Beech-Nut site in downtown Canajoharie.

Former site owner Todd Clifford had hired B&B Recycling to remove several warehouse buildings.

Canajoharie Mayor Francis Avery said, "They've skipped town. A warrant of arrest was issued for them and we expect to never see them again."

The village of Canajoharie leveled the initial charges against B&B Recycling after they left the former Beech-Nut warehouse site a mess. They informed the village that they'd leave behind only lead-free cement blocks, Avery said. However, they also left significant debris including broken cement and plaster -- debris that Avery said "could've been cleaned up in a couple of hours."

Though the company promised to have debris cleared by mid-January, "they did not, so we took them to court," said Avery, noting that the case was transferred from the Village Court of Canajoharie to the Town Court of Minden, where Garvin was ordered to appear in late January.

Also remaining on site in a standing warehouse are metal trash containers filled with hundreds of pounds of asbestos that'd been removed prior to warehouse deconstruction.

The asbestos, said Avery, was improperly packaged.

He commented, "the people who own the dumpsters would like to take them away right now, but the asbestos was never properly packaged, so they're not going anywhere."

Although the asbestos is currently, "in bags behind locked doors, not out in the elements," he said, "they're not moving until such a time that they are properly packaged and the Environmental Protection Agency and New York State Labor Department gives us approval to let them go."

B&B Recycling ran into a road block in 2014 during the first phase of warehouse removal when village Code Enforcement Officer Cliff Dorrough shut down operations because the company didn't obtain proper permits for asbestos removal before beginning demolition work.

Dorrough also alleged that the company removed valuable materials from asbestos-tainted parts of the building without appropriate permits.

Clifford, owner of TD Development, LLC, claims that he's no longer responsible for the former Beech-Nut property, which was sold in December 2014 to TD Development, Inc, owned by Jeff Wendel.

Avery noted that Wendel has accompanied Clifford on village visits, explaining that he feels that obvious, close ties between the two men remain.

Clifford is currently being sued in US District Court by Wood and Bricks LLC, of Wisconsin. Allegedly, Clifford hired the company to complete significant demolition on a 550,000-square-foot, abandoned Kaman Corp. facility in Moosup, Connecticut.

The suit, filed on January 28, claiming up to \$1 million dollars in damages, alleges that Wood and Bricks, LLC paid Clifford several hundred thousand dollars for the right to remove the buildings and resell the scrap material they salvaged.

The company states in the suit that they salvaged around a half-million dollars in material before being evicted from the site in January, at which point Clifford allegedly began to remove the salvaged materials, claiming that Wood and Bricks LLC crews violated their agreement, improperly removing asbestos and damaging a portion of the site.